

Front Page
Other Page

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The Editorial Page

In Our Opinion...

We Have A Right To Know

Do the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Central Intelligence Agency have too much power?

Questions about the CIA are nothing new, but it is only recently that the long-honored FBI's "bugging" techniques have caused raised eyebrows. It seems they've been listening in on conversations they shouldn't, and all by mistake.

Only yesterday, U. S. Senator Joseph Clark of Pennsylvania leveled his verbal guns at both organizations, citing them as threats to Democracy much as the military-industrial complex was so labeled by former President Eisenhower.

We only hope that Senator Clark backs up his statements and convictions better than he did in his racket charges in Western Pennsylvania. He was right, but never did much about it.

He's right in this case, too, for we can't be too careful about such police agencies. The CIA, for instance, is so super secret that even Congress can't touch it, and nobody, but nobody knows how much it spends (except probably the Russians). Yet, the CIA has been accused of not only running U. S. foreign policy, but taking active parts in the politics of foreign countries.

As for the FBI, the principal concern is that it could turn into a Gestapo-like organization. This was a fear at the beginning, but has been largely dissipated simply because it didn't turn out that way. And we still think it won't.

However, there definitely needs to be closer scrutiny of the use of listening devices, and general investigation techniques applied by the FBI. As for criticism of J. Edgar Hoover himself, it's our opinion that there can't be sacred cows in government.

The balance has to be between protecting the nation's security and protecting the right of the individual citizen. Since history has shown repeatedly that individual rights are so easily trampled beneath the weight of government and unscrupulous, power hungry, officials, there has to be constant vigilance in this direction.

Most certainly, the people of the United States have a right to know more about these two organizations, their powers and activities than they do.